M
765 marriage after the end of mourning, they have the right to accept
587 various foods and firewood from them. But a rather dim view is taken of these services rendered by strangers, that is, by persons not related to the heirs. For theoretically the widows belong to the heirs and are their wives, since the financial marriage agreement continues. (2) Nevertheless, if these men are not at enmity

2. See Chapter III, Article IX.

with the heirs, they encounter no opposition. For once the period of seclusion is terminated, the widows are free to go back to their respective families and be taken in marriage by anyone able to pay the bride price. Nevertheless, suitors are not permitted to enter the seclusion hut even in the last period. They must therefore transmit presents through the agency of the biúnanyí (sing. eúnanyí), that is, the relatives of the deceased.

M
765 This last period begins with the ceremony of being lifted off the ground. The widows are made to get up onto the beóngá --
● M [423] bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. The beóngá consist of split
P branches of the parasol tree, placed on long branches, which are
[352] in turn attached to posts, forming a small primitive bed, which is
● [513] the usual bed of the Batswá that is sometimes also used by the Baotó, if the latter have nothing better. From then on the widows can rest on these; they may "rise from the ground." The parasol tree branches are called beóngá (sing. boóngá), "dead, dry wood." The same root is also used with other prefixes: eóngá, pl. biónga; loóngá, pl. mbóngá. The verbs used are áta, "to split, rend" or fanja, "to cut." Nowadays the severity of this custom is mitigated by the substitution of beánga, transportable wicker beds, for the beóngá.

The ceremony is accompanied by a few dances and a bit of beer. The head of the family addresses the widows as follows: "We have split beóngá for you; climb up on them." Then he presents them with a few hens, given by relatives of the deceased. The widows prepare them and eat them all.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out [481] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. [513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom [556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same 352 time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for [562] the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given 563 was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zee*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying [672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsono* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not 262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in [623] references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. [689] The rules affecting the *nongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists